

Historic, Archive Document

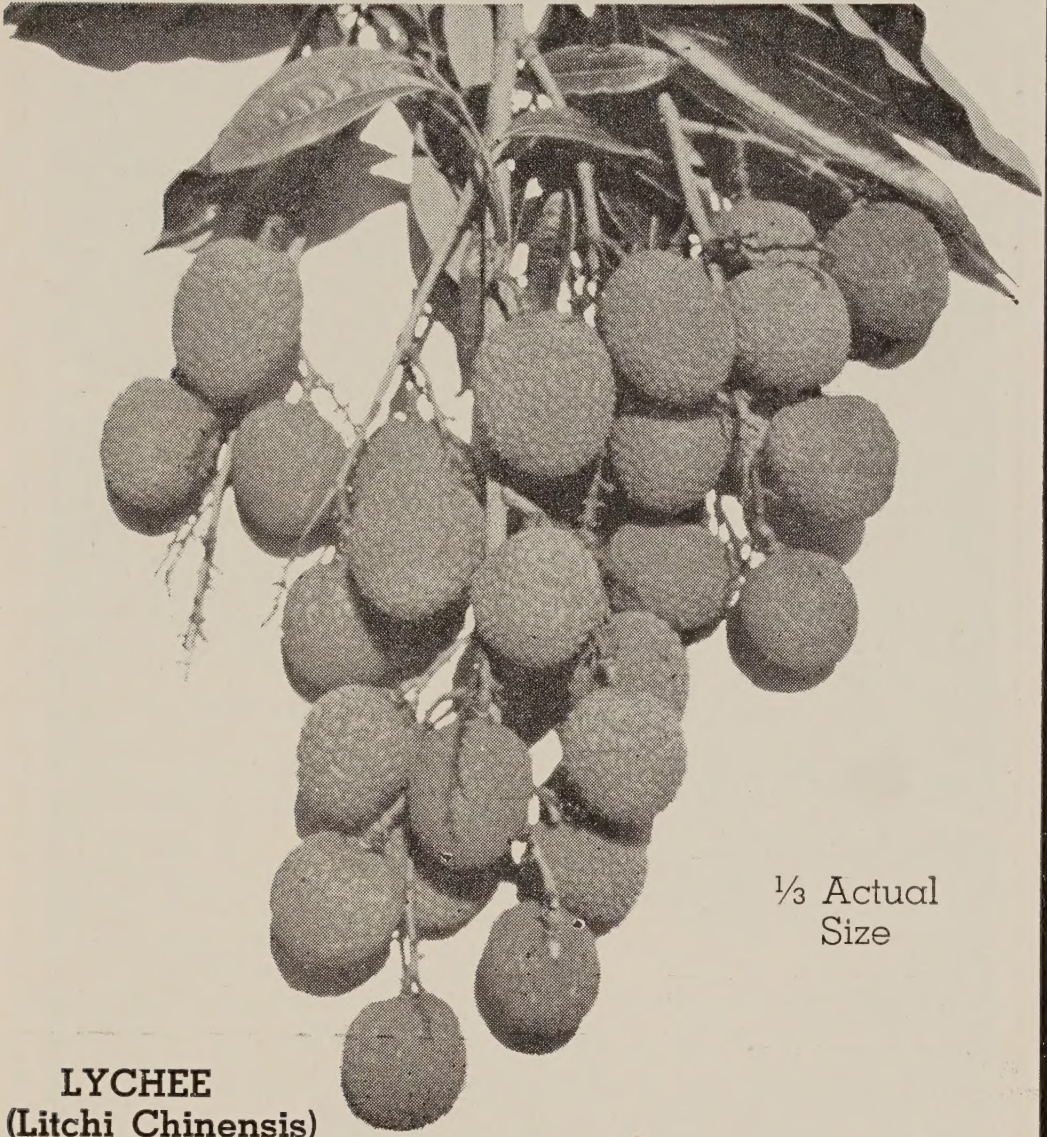
Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

62,17

1949

Ra

THE LYCHEE



$\frac{1}{3}$ Actual
Size

LYCHEE
(*Litchi Chinensis*)

Rapidly taking a place in the foremost rank of valuable fruit trees successfully grown in South Florida, is the Lychee, a sub-tropical evergreen tree that produces one of the world's finest fresh fruits.

The tree with its glossy green foliage is attractive the year around. Its fresh ripe fruit is about the size and color of a large strawberry and is produced in great clusters. Delicious in flavor, the fruit wins instant acceptance with everyone.

Both commercial growers seeking diversification in fruit crops and home gardeners looking for unusual fruit trees for yard planting are turning to the Lychee. It is destined for increasing importance in Florida horticulture.



HARVESTING FRESH LYCHEES

This 24 year-old Lychee tree at Auburndale, Fla., has a record of continuous bearing and profit to its owner. Producing fruit of the Brewster variety, it now is about 38 feet high and has a spread of 42 feet. In 1948 it produced nearly 400 pounds of fruit which sold at the grove for approximately \$300. On a price per pound basis this was more than 600 times as much money as was received for grapefruit grown on the same property. One acre of 25 such Lychee trees, would, on present markets, return 10 per cent on \$75,000.

In a number of Florida locations the Lychee has outgrown nearby citrus trees. Trees ordinarily producing more than 100 pounds of fresh Lychees a year are located in DeSoto City, Clearwater, Babson Park, Avon Park and Laurel. Newer plantings are growing well in other parts of South Florida.

For centuries the Lychee has been esteemed in South China where it has been brought to a high state of perfection. The fruit is most highly prized in its fresh state, but it is also dried, canned and preserved in a number of ways.

In this country the dried fruit, often known as "Lychee nut", has been known to diners in Chinese restaurants and to others who have received them as gifts from Chinese friends on holidays and festive occasions. Until recently, the few fresh fruit that were produced in Florida have gone almost exclusively to Chinese in northern cities.

Trees of the Brewster variety of Lychee, now the most popular commercial strain, were first introduced into Florida in 1907. The fresh fruit is the size of a large strawberry and bright red in color. It is covered with a thin, tough and brittle skin which, when removed, reveals a glistening translucent flesh surrounding a single seed. In flavor the Lychee is deliciously different, high in sugar content, and rarely fails to win new devotees with the first taste.

The Lychee bears in Florida generally from June 20 to July 10. Blooms appear in panicles in late winter. Owners of bearing trees have never failed to find a ready market for their fruit and it has been estimated that the current average price of 75 cents a pound to growers will continue to hold for many years to come. Retail prices of \$1.50 a pound have found a firm acceptance. Experimental mail order sale promotion has shown that a wide market among new customers awaits the time when greater production has been attained.

Because of the active demand for all the fresh fruit that can be produced by growers, little attempt has been made to find methods of canning or preserving Florida grown Lychees. It has been demonstrated that the fruit can be satisfactorily preserved by quick freezing and samples have been kept in perfect condition for long periods by this means. No extensive experiments have been undertaken to produce dried Lychees in Florida.



A CLUSTER OF LYCHEES

Bearing habit of the Lychee is well demonstrated in this photograph of the clusters of fruit as they are produced on the tree. In harvesting for commercial shipments, some of the twigs and foliage are clipped with the fruit as it has been found that Lychees picked in this manner retain their color longer. Wrapped in the new food protective films, the perishable Lychee can be sent long distances. While the color of the skin may change to a dark brown, the fruit will retain its quality under refrigeration for two weeks or longer.

The Lychee comes into bearing at an early age and remains productive for exceptionally long periods. In China, trees are still bearing at ages known to be over 300 years. While the Lychee is too recently established in Florida for age observation, the oldest trees are still growing vigorously.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Like citrus and many other varieties of sub-tropical fruits, Lychee seedlings cannot be depended upon to reproduce true to type. As ordinary methods of budding and grafting have not proven successful, inarching or air layering are depended upon for exact reproduction of varieties. Air layering, under recently improved techniques, has proven to be the most efficient method for reproducing superior varieties of the Lychee.

Young Lychee trees may be planted at any time of the year. They should be set out in fertile soil, well mulched and watered more frequently than the average fruit tree planting. Well rotted manure may be added to the soil when planting. The trees can later utilize more than the normal amount of fertilizer applied to citrus trees. If set in low ground they should be elevated when planted. The water level should be at least two and a half feet down for best results. Some shade, such as cheesecloth, is desirable the first summer until the trees have established themselves, and they should be protected from high winds and severe frosts. In orchard formations the trees should be planted forty feet apart in each direction with another tree in the center of the square so formed.

Young trees can be expected to come into bearing from four to six years after they have been set out. Their growth is rapid once they have become established, and a vigorous tree sends out a new flush of leaves several times a year.

When mature the tree withstands nearly as much cold as the average citrus tree. It appears to prefer a somewhat acid soil and thrives best in soil that is reasonably rich. Many parts of South Florida have soil and climate conditions that favor the growth of the Lychee and large specimens are thriving on the ordinary type of citrus land. Moisture requirements of the Lychee are believed to be somewhat greater than that for citrus.



Layered Lychee trees propagated for commercial sale, are sold in containers only after they have established vigorous root systems.

A Lychee tree planted near the home will be a source of pleasure the year round. An orchard of Lychees can be depended upon to be a source of income for many years to come.

We have Lychee trees in containers ready for immediate planting. Prices and available sizes given upon request.

**Lychee Orchards
Laurel, Fla.**

